



Hawai'i KIDS COUNT

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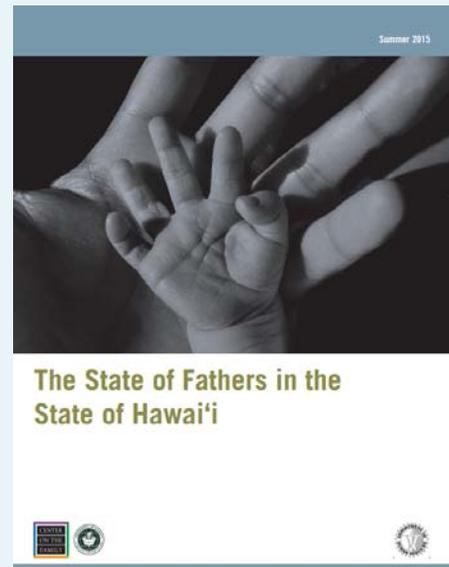
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THE STATE OF FATHERS IN THE STATE OF HAWAII'

A father's involvement in his child's life is critical to that child's cognitive, social and behavioral development. In *The State of Fathers in the State of Hawai'i*, Dr. Selva Lewin-Bizan, Assistant Professor at the Department of Family & Consumer Sciences and Faculty Associate at the Center on the Family at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, presents a socioeconomic snapshot of fathers in Hawai'i, looking at their number, geographical distribution, the children they are fathering, and the families and households they are part of, highlighting the differences and similarities to mainland U.S. populations. The report – which is the result of a collaboration between the University of Hawai'i Center on the Family and the State Commission on Fatherhood of the Hawai'i Department of Human Services – lays the groundwork for assessing the needs of families and guiding targeted programmatic efforts for fathers. The report presents data from the U.S. Census, the American Community Survey, the Hawai'i Homeless Management Information System, and the Hawai'i Department of Public Safety in the following areas: family composition in Hawai'i (households, households with children, two-parent and single-parent households, parent and grandparent households); characteristics of children and families in Hawai'i (median family income, public assistance, poverty status, housing tenure, school enrollment); characteristics of fathers in Hawai'i (marital status, race and ethnicity, employment status, education attainment, income); and characteristics of special populations (fathers involved with the criminal justice system and homeless fathers). Findings show that Hawai'i fathers are doing better than their mainland counterparts. Data highlights include:

- Fathers in Hawai'i are more likely than their counterparts in the U.S. to be part of a married-couple family. In Hawai'i, almost three-quarters (72.6%) of families with minor children are maintained by married couples, compared to 67.9% nationwide.



- In Hawai'i, fathers are less likely to be absent from the family (18.9%), compared to 24.1% in the U.S.
- The percentage of children living in low-income married-couple households in Hawai'i is 7.6%, while the share of children living in father-absent family households is almost 5 times higher, at 35%.

The report can be downloaded from the Hawai'i Department of Human Services website:

<http://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/The-State-of-Fathers-in-the-State-of-Hawaii-FINAL-PDF.pdf>

and from the Center on the Family website:

http://uhfamily.hawaii.edu/publications/brochures/92f56_The-State-of-Fathers-in-the-State-of-Hawaii-FINAL.pdf.

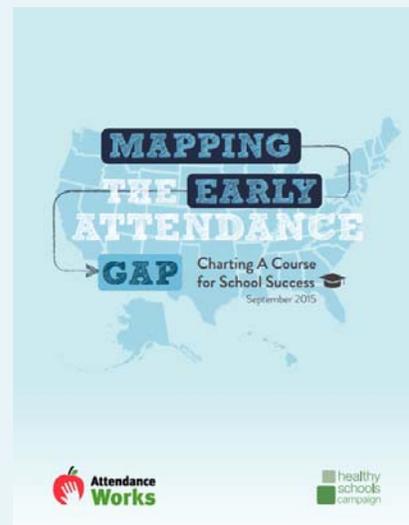
MAPPING THE EARLY ATTENDANCE GAP

According to Attendance Works and the Healthy Schools Campaign, disparities in school attendance rates in the early school years are contributing to the achievement gaps and high school drop out rates in later years. Over five million students are missing nearly a month of school every year across the nation, and suffering academically because of it. Absenteeism in early years can lead to weaker reading skills, higher rates of retention, and lower attendance rates in later grades. In middle school and high school, chronic absenteeism is a predictor of dropping out. Many absences, especially among younger students, are due to health problems, learning disabilities, and mental health issues related to trauma and community violence.

Chronic absenteeism (missing 10% or more of the school year for any reason) affects some student populations more than others. Among those most affected are low-income students and students with disabilities. Absenteeism among low-income students often reflects the challenges that accompany poverty, such as unstable housing, unreliable transportation, and little access to quality health care. Some absences among students with disabilities can be attributed to health issues, but others occur because of inappropriate educational placements, bullying, or school aversion. Data show that some states have wider gaps between students identified as disabled and their peers who are not, and between low-income students and their peers who are not low-income; Hawai'i is among the states with the widest gaps for both. Hawai'i -specific data includes:

- Hawai'i has one of the widest gaps in fourth grade absenteeism (i.e., missing three or more days in prior month) based on income. Over a quarter (28%) of low-income students (as measured by reduced lunch eligibility) have such absences, compared to 17% who are not low-income.
- Over a third (37%) of Hawai'i's eighth graders with poor attendance (again, three or more days absent in prior month) identified as having a disability (needing special education) compared to 28% of eighth graders in the U.S.
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The report proposes a five-step approach for closing the attendance gap, which includes making the case that chronic early absence matters, mapping chronic early absence, engaging partners in unpacking why early



absences occur, learning from positive outliers, and embedding action into existing initiatives.

The full report can be found here:

<http://awareness.attendanceworks.org/new-report-mapping-the-early-attendance-gap>.

POVERTY AMONG FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN HAWAI'I: WHAT THE NEW DATA FROM U.S. CENSUS SHOW

Living in poverty can have long-lasting negative consequences for children. Children raised in families at or near the poverty level are more likely to do poorly in school and to earn less and experience greater unemployment as adults. The pathways by which poverty affects child development and educational outcomes are complex and often indirect. For example, children growing up in poor families are at risk for inadequate nutrition which in turn affects brain development and overall health. At the family level, parents experiencing ongoing economic hardship exhibit higher levels of stress, depression and increased risk of substance use, which may lead to less supportive parenting practices affecting children's development and learning. There are also community influences, including living in disadvantaged and high-risk neighborhoods with under-resourced schools and supports.



The U.S. Census just released the most recent American Community Survey one-year estimates showing that 11.4% of people in Hawai'i lived in poverty in 2014, while nearly 15% of children and youth under the age of 18 years lived below the federal poverty level. Nearly 12% of Hawai'i's families with children under 18 live in poverty. Single mother families seem to have higher rates of poverty: over a quarter (26.8%) of female householder families (with no husband present) with children live in poverty and nearly a third (31.5%) with young children (under 5 years of age) live in poverty according to the 2014 estimates. Among married couple families with children, 6.6% live in poverty.

The fifth Supplemental Poverty Measure report was also released by the Census Bureau in September. The SPM provides evidence that programs and resources (such as TANF, SNAP and/or tax credits) reduce the impact of poverty and that poverty declines as a result of such programs. As an example, without Social Security benefits, the SPM rate in the U.S. would be 23.5% (74.4 million people) in 2014, rather than 15.3% (48.4 million people). Without refundable tax credits (the Earned Income Tax Credit [EITC] and the refundable portion of the child tax credit), the poverty rate for all people would have been 18.4% rather than 15.3%. Subtractions such as child support, income and payroll taxes, or work-related expenses, resulted in lower poverty rates.

It is important to maintain these important programs that keep families, especially single women with young children, out of poverty.

For more information about the new U.S. Census data and Hawai'i KIDS COUNT data, contact Ann Pobutsky, PhD, Hawai'i KIDS COUNT Data Analyst at pobutsky@hawaii.edu.

ⁱData available from: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/american-factfinder/>; see Table DP03 Selected Economic Characteristics and Table 21702 Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months of Families.

ⁱⁱ The SPM is based on thresholds derived by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) from Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES) data, with different thresholds for renters, homeowners with a mortgage and those who own their homes free and clear. The thresholds are adjusted for geographic differences in housing costs. The SPM resource measure starts with pre-tax cash income, and adds the estimated value of nutritional, housing and energy assistance and tax credits but subtracts estimates of paid child support and child care, other work expenses,

payroll and income taxes and medical out-of-pocket expenditures. US Census Bureau. Available from <http://www.census.gov/library/publications/2015/demo/p60-254.html>.

iii Table 4a: Effect of Individual Elements on SPM Rates: 2014. Available from: <http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/P60-254.pdf>

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